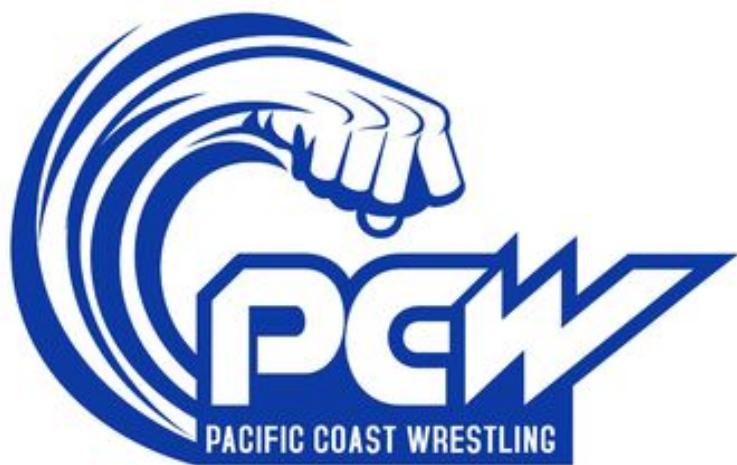


# PCW Release The Kraken: Maybe The Kraken Could Be More Fun



IMG Credit: Pacific Coast Wrestling

## Release The Kraken

Date: January 9, 2016

Location: Oak Street Gym, Torrence, California

Commentators: Christian Cole, Todd Keneley

This is one of the final DVDs I got in the set that I got and as luck would have it, the final two are both from the same company. That would be Pacific Coast Wrestling, an independent company from California and this is their very first event. I know a fair deal of the names listed so maybe we've got something good here. Let's get to it.

The hosts (including Keneley, who formerly did Impact commentary) welcome us to the show and run down some of the card, including a lights out match. How much of a feud can you have in the debut?

Opening sequence, presumably featuring highlights from the show we're about to see. Kind of odd but they have to start with something.

## Joe Graves vs. Timothy Thatcher

Thatcher is a somewhat well known submission master and comes out to what would become Walter's music in NXT UK. Apparently Thatcher is replacing someone named Rick Luxury, which would seem to be an upgrade. They grapple to start with the referee breaking it up against the ropes. Nice to see someone doing his job for a change. Graves can't get control of the leg so Thatcher escapes a chinlock for an early standoff.

We hit the grappling again with Thatcher taking him down and going for the arm. Graves finally tries something different with a chop to the back but Thatcher is right back with a headlock on the mat. The Fujiwara armbar attempt is blocked as it's all grappling so far. Graves gets in a suplex and this time it's Thatcher escaping an armbar, setting up a right hand to Graves' head.

Thatcher stays on the arm and bends the fingers back before switching into a leglock. Graves has finally had it with this and starts throwing forearms to the head. A cross armbreaker doesn't work either so Graves snaps off another suplex. Thatcher throws him down by the arm though and it's a Fujiwara armbar to make Graves tap at 8:31.

**Rating:** B-. This one is going to entirely depend on your taste as the grappling was rather impressive and they did mention a history between the two, meaning that we're likely to see a rematch down the line. At the same time here though, the match didn't feel like it was building towards anything and just ended out of nowhere. It was entertaining, but felt more like a grappling display than a match.

Here's an attorney named MK, who isn't on the format sheet. He demands respect and silence, though he promises to speak slowly so these California wrestling fans can understand him. MK represents the Almighty Sheik, who will be facing MVP in the main event. Promoters and promotions fear the Sheik, which

is why his match is not being sanctioned. Sheik has held World Titles while MVP has been held with handcuffs.

MVP is nothing more than a common street criminal, so cue MVP to respond. He insults MK's clothing and steals his line about speaking slowly. Yes MVP is an ex-con but he's turned things around since then, including winning titles and kicked out of the Undertaker's chokeslam. Kane set him on fire, so why would he be scared of the Sheik? MK says in Sheik's country, MVP is Sheik's b\*\*\*\*. MVP lays him out with a shot to the face and gives him a World's Strongest Slam to set up the Ballin Elbow but MK bails. This was as fillerish as you could get, though I can understand helping to build up the first main event a bit.

At some point around here (not sure if before or after the promo), there was a second match with Chris Evans defeating Johnny Savoi. Not sure why that was cut but it's not like the DVD was all that long in the first place. It's not listed on the DVD case either so I guess it was a dark match on a six match show.

### Classic Connection vs. Keepers of the Faith

The Connection (Levi Shapiro/Buddy Royal) has a masked manager named Fat Dick Johnson, who speaks in a weird country accent and talks about bringing their own tag ropes. Later, the Connection would get a new manager in the form of Brian Zane of Wrestling With Wregret fame.

Before the Keepers come out, Johnson talks about how they have tag ropes because they're old school. He doesn't like the Keepers, because one of them "looks like a retarded Steiner Brother" and the other would have to get smarter just to be stupid. The Keepers (Dom Vitali/Gabriel Gallo) finally cut him off and we're ready to go, despite a lack of an explanation of what kind of faith they are keeping. Gallows does seem to be a bit Rick Steinerish as Vitali has to pull him back by the chain around his neck (though Vitali has one of his own).

The Connection stalls on the floor for a good while as we wait around on an opening bell. We can't get an opening bell yet either as we get a weapons check and then an argument over who should start. Eventually it's Royal vs. Gallo to start with Royal being smart enough to kick Gallo in the ribs instead of trying a test of strength. Royal tries a suplex and slam, both of which are reversed into the real thing by the much stronger Gallo. Shapiro comes in and is knocked outside with a single shoulder.

The Connection takes a breather on the floor until Shapiro comes back in to continue the action fest. Gallo slams him down so it's off to Vitali for two, followed by Gallo coming right back in. A missed charge gives Shapiro a breather but Vitali comes in for a Death Valley Driver. Vitali misses a moonsault but gets two anyway, followed by diving onto Royal for a bonus.

Back in and Johnson trips Vitali from the floor so Shapiro can finally get in some offense. The Connection starts stomping away in the corner with Johnson adding some choking for a bonus. A dropkick to the knee lets Shapiro hammer away and Royal's running knee in the corner gets two. The triangle choke goes on for a bit, followed by a clothesline to cut off Vitali's comeback bid.

We hit the front facelock to keep Vitali in trouble and it's Royal jumping over Shapiro to land on Vitali's back, albeit in the corner instead of on the ropes for a little change. Vitali finally explodes out of the corner with a clothesline and the hot tag brings in Gallo to clean house. Everything breaks down and Vitali spears Royal, leaving Gallo to clothesline Shapiro for two....as the referee realizes that Shapiro isn't legal. The melee lets Johnson get in a cane shot to Gallo to give Royal the pin at 13:58.

**Rating:** C-. It might not have been the quality of the first but this was a bit more entertaining with the old school tag

formula. That being said, it was longer than it needed to be and Johnson's stuff got a little annoying in a hurry. I can always go for an old school tag match though and the Connection worked well in the Midnight Express knockoff roles.

The Sheik knows MVP and lists off some of the places the two of them have worked over the years. They've never fought before though and in this case, the headlines are already out about the two of them facing off. This will not be a wrestling match or catch as catch can. Unpredictable times call for a reliable friend, which seems to be Sheik's trusty spike.

#### JR Kratos vs. Dylan Drake

Kratos was part of GFW's Amped tapings. Drake on the other hand comes out in a Ric Flair style robe and seems to have retired from wrestling since this was taped. Drake's running boot before the bell is shrugged off as Kratos sends him outside for an early breather. Back in and Kratos hits a fireman's carry takeover, which sends Drake bailing to the floor again.

Back in and again and Kratos easily takes him down again as the grappling can begin. Drake's triangle choke doesn't work so well as Kratos powerbombs him down for two instead. Drake gets smart with a rake of the eyes and wraps Kratos' leg around the post for his first advantage. The leglock goes on, followed by a legdrop to the leg for a bonus (the Ric Flair robe might have been more appropriate than I thought).

It's another leglock to hold Kratos in place for a bit, though the leg is fine enough to whip Drake hard into the corner. A crotchling against the post makes it even worse for Drake and a running (good) knee to the side of the head knocks him silly. Back in and Kratos gets two off a dropkick, with the knee pain inspired delay meaning the cover only gets two. Or the fact that it was just a dropkick.

Drake flips him off out of general stupidity so Kratos hits a powerslam and wheelbarrow suplex for two more. Drake's powerbomb onto the knee gets two, even with feet on the ropes. That's shrugged off and it's a chokeslam into a sitout powerbomb (the Game Changer) for the pin on Drake at 11:39.

**Rating:** D+. Kratos looked good here but the match just kind of kept going until it got to an ending. Drake was nothing memorable in the slightest and was working a bit of an old school style without the energy or emotion that would make it feel special. Boring match here, though Kratos could be worth something against a better opponent.

### Scorpio Sky vs. TJ Perkins

This almost has to be better. Perkins hasn't been in WWE yet but he's pretty much the exact same...everything actually. We get the streamers treatment and Sky doesn't seem impressed. The stalling ensues, with Cole talking about his experience (in a group called the Experience) with Sky in Championship Wrestling From Hollywood. They hit the mat to (finally) start it's a pair of flips to get us up to a standoff.

Sky takes over with a wristlock so Perkins spins around into one of his own. How wrestling of him. A dropkick lets Perkins nip up so Sky (bald of course) claims a hair pull. That joke always makes me chuckle. Sky takes over and stomps away, only to get headscissored right back down. A grab of the leg gets Sky out of trouble as the announcers talk about Sky's recent success in mixed martial arts. Another headscissors gets TJ out of trouble and it's a basement dropkick so Perkins can pose a bit.

Sky is back up to kick Perkins outside, then sends him inside, then sends him outside again. Does it seem like they're just killing time here? I mean it's clear that they are, but I didn't know how well it was coming through. Back in and a backbreaker drops Perkins again, followed by a backbreaker to keep up the variety. A hard whip into the corner stays on the back but it's too early for what looked like a Sharpshooter.

Perkins snaps the arm ala Pentagon Jr. and the comeback is on, somehow with Perkins as the face it seems. Who looks at him and sees a face? Sky gets in a knee, stops to glare at the camera, and hits another backbreaker. At least this time he bends Perkins' back over a knee to mix it up a bit. We hit the camel clutch but since that's a bit too thrilling, it's another knee to the back and a chinlock to tone it down a bit. That gives the announcers the chance to talk about Sky coming to the show straight from his grandmother's funeral. You know, just to perk

things up a bit.

Perkins fights up and hits a dropkick but it's a hard looking collision for a double knockdown. Back up and Perkins hits a Regal Roll into a standing corkscrew splash. Perkins takes his time going up so Sky can block a sunset bomb. Sky's victory roll and knee to the face get two each, followed by another double knockdown. Sky is up first and hits a nasty looking German suplex into the corner but another knee hits buckle. The suplex into the corner is shrugged off in ten seconds so Perkins can hit a springboard missile dropkick to the back, meaning it's a rollup for two.

Perkins' frog splash hits knees to give Sky his own two and they're both spent. They slug it out until Sky hits a great looking jumping knee to the head...for two. That should have been the finish (about the fifth so far). The yet to be named Detonation Kick sets up another armbreaker from Perkins but Sky stacks it up for the break. That's it for Sky, who hits the Ace of Spades (TKO) and the Big Fat Kill (running knee to the face) to finish Perkins at 22:15.

**Rating:** B-. They were going for the epic here but it was more long than great. That being said, it was the best match of the night and probably the match the promotion is going to point to in their early days. That's understandable in this case too as they had a long, rather good match, which needed about three minutes clipped off to really make it work as intended.

MVP is here to grapple because he loves wrestling. Then he found out he's facing the Sheik, who likes to harm people instead of wrestling them. Maybe Sheik has seen everything MVP has done and owns and thinks he's gone soft. Yeah maybe his success has gotten to him a bit, but the threat of someone trying to take it all away from him fires him up again. MVP takes off the jewelry and says it's not going to be the MVP who made Shinsuke Nakamura tap or the MVP who beat Chris Benoit two straight falls.

It's going to be the MVP from the ghetto of Miami and who spent nine and a half years in prison. Sheik is going to get to see the real MVP, who

has seen and survived all kinds of things that Sheik can't imagine. I'm not big on MVP for the most part, but this was very good and made MVP seem like a threat with star power.

### MVP vs. Almighty Sheik

Anything goes. Sheik (better known (I think) as Josef Samael in MLW) starts throwing chairs into the ring before MVP comes out and is flanked by MK. Hang on though (of course) as Sheik swings a chair to keep MVP on the floor. Let's throw in some Big Match Intros, allowing the commentator to say that Republicans are throwing things at their TVs because a Syrian wrestler is getting this much time.

MVP comes in with a chair of his own and a duel sends Sheik outside so more stalling can ensue. The delay lets MVP throw the chairs out and lay on the ropes for a bit. They're on the floor in a hurry as this is likely to be one of the walking brawls. MVP drops him throat first across the barricade and hammers away. A flag shot (with the announcers not being sure which country it is, despite knowing that Sheik is from Syria) puts MVP down so he hits Sheik low for the break.

They fight into the crowd with MVP burying him under some chairs. That lasts all of a few seconds until Sheik is up with some chair shots to the ribs, followed by more walking through the crowd. Now it's over near the doors and vending machines, including a trashcan shot to Sheik's back. As commentary complains about fans being on their phones during this (fair enough), it turns into a fight on the floor with MVP choking from the back.

Sheik finds his spike for a breather and hits more chair shots, followed by a bottle of mustard to the head. A piledriver on the floor is countered with a backdrop as Cole goes into a rant about Sheik being the reason Americans don't like Syrian refugees. Sheik shrugs off a chair shot and stabs MVP in the ribs but MVP gets the spike away. That means a cut to Sheik's head and....yeah let's skip the ring and go back into the crowd.

With that exhausted, Sheik heads back inside and MVP throws in some chairs but loses the spike. A DDT gives Sheik two so MK comes in. That

means it's time for fire, which hits MK by mistake. Sheik beats up the referee as security comes in, meaning the match is thrown out at 13:00.

**Rating:** D+. This was just a wild brawl with both guys walking around the ring until we got to the big angle ending. I'm not a big fan of something like this, though they did a good job of setting things up throughout the show. The match felt like a bigger deal, but this was just walking from place to place so both guys could hit each other with things until the finish. It was a good setup with a pretty weak match to follow up.

Wrestlers and security can't break things up so more wrestlers come out to split them apart. The bell rings and since wrestlers are Pavlovian by nature, the fight is on again. They're eventually held back and Sheik leaves but MVP has something to say. MVP throws out the challenge for the rematch in March, threatening to actually kill Sheik next time.

The announcer thanks us for coming out and tells us to come back next time, though there are six minutes left. MVP drops the Ballin Elbow on Sheik's robe before leaving.

A five minute recap video ends the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. I didn't care for the main event, but it helped with the show's biggest problem: it was the only match on the show that didn't feel lifeless (though Perkins vs. Sky came close). So much of the show felt like they were just doing matches for the sake of doing matches, which may be due to this being the first show. It wasn't horrible and nothing was really bad, but only the last little bit made me interested in seeing where it was going.

That being said, I'll be skipping the second show as it didn't make me want to keep watching. You shouldn't need filler on a two hour show, but between the promos and hype for the main event, this could have been closer to an hour and a half. I already have the third one though so we'll be moving on to that, which hopefully offers an improvement. Given that the second show has three rematches from this show, I'm not exactly thrilled with the prospects. Not the worst by far, but it needs some work to get to good.

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